

B E L L O N A ;

O R,

The Genius of Britain ;

A

P O E T I C A L V I S I O N :

I N S C R I B E D T O

J O H N D U N N I N G , E s q . o f L i n c o l n ' s - I n n .

“ Again we glory in the war's alarms ;

“ Again we combat half the world in arms.”

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN a great PEOPLE, who by the bravery of their ancestors, the extent of their commerce, and the peculiarity of their situation, have attained an envied pre-eminence in opulence and glory, are, on account of their pusillanimity, insulted by the very enemies whom they have humbled, and by their inactivity, despised by the very allies whom they have protected; they must either by one noble effort, restore the lustre of their reputation, or for ever sink in infamy and disgrace. When an honourable war, or an inglorious peace becomes the only alternative, a great nation, emulous of the reputation of their ancestors, and jealous of their own glory, cannot long hesitate.

At

At no time have the English evidenced a greater spirit of exertion, a more generous contempt of danger, or a more noble promptitude to action, than when by the power, or the perfidy of their enemies, their political existence, as a great nation, became questionable; destruction stared them in the face; and ruin seemed inevitable. Like the Romans (while Rome was yet virtuous) their courage kept pace with the danger, and when a people of less resolution would have sunk under their calamities, they by combating annihilated them. When we compare things present with things past, and consider the unsullied reputation of our arms, during the auspicious reigns of an Edward, an Elizabeth, an Anne, and a George, and that even in the inglorious times, when England submitted to the vices of a Charles, and the follies of a James, we were not insensible to the calls of national honour; we must view our present situation with insuperable contempt, and while we recapitulate with silent veneration, the daring intrepidity of our forefathers, cannot but behold with unspeakable scorn the pusillanimous inactivity of their sons. The finesses of delay, the narrow policy of artifice, the parade of fleets, the display of armies, may well become the temporising spirit of the French, but they are



ill suited to the genius of their conquerors.----We are not devoid of spirit, nor destitute of resources: the patronage of a munificent prince, and the insults of a natural enemy, would call the former into action; the confidence of the people is only requisite for the latter.

War always teems with bloodshed and devastation, and is only to be adopted when the injuries of a people justify the choice, when their sufferings call aloud for vengeance, and when by it alone can be procured an honourable and a lasting peace.----But war, attended with all its dreadful and inseparable concomitants, is often productive in its consequences of the greatest advantages. During its continuance, it may lessen trade, but it often opens new sources of commerce; it may curtail their luxuries, but it always hardens an effeminate people:---Above all, it promotes a spirit of œconomy, than which nothing can be more congenial to the constitution of a free country. During a ruinous and destructive war, the Hollanders, by contracting their expences, found ample resources against the common enemy,

in a national œconomy, and by it and their perseverance, emancipating themselves, founded the basis of their present opulence.

To rouse the dormant spirit of my countrymen, to animate them by the example of their ancestors, and the sense of their own danger, this little Poem is intended. In the breast of the candid critic, the intention will in some measure palliate the execution. Temporary productions rather claim the indulgence, than provoke the censure of the judicious. Poetry resembles painting, a hasty sketch may exhibit a bold and masterly outline; but it is time and industry alone can mellow the colouring, and give grace and elegance to the composition.

BELLONA;





B E L L O N A ;

O R,

THE GENIUS OF BRITAIN:

A POETICAL VISION.

AS pensive on my tear-stain'd couch I lay,
And sigh'd the solitary night away,
Restless I ponder'd o'er my parent state,
And saw her nodding on the brink of fate,
Beheld the Punic faith in Gaul renew'd,
And once GREAT-BRITAIN by herself subdu'd.

B

Fir'd

Fir'd by that flame which thro' great Ruffel stole,
 And with its warmth chear'd dying Sydney's soul ;
 Like Cato, constant in thy country's cause,
 Like Tully, friend to freedom, and her laws ;
 While for thy brow I plait the laurel'd crown,
 And on thy fame, O DUNNING! graft mine own :
 Deign with the muse t' unfold th' historic page,
 And give thy sanction to her patriot rage.

Now had the lamp of night's diminish'd ray,
 And fading stars foretold the coming day,
 When sleep, that grateful temporary grave,
 Where rest entomb'd the tyrant and the slave ;

Refreshing



Refreshing sleep! my wearied limbs confin'd,
 But could not chace my country from my mind;
 For lo! methought some deity unseen,
 Convey'd me gently to a glorious scene,
 Where ocean's furges lave the Kentish plain,
 And royal Thames disgorges in the main.

Here to my wond'ring eye the vision yields
 Collected squadrons, and embattled fields;
 Where marshall'd troops to deathless fame aspire,
 Where warlike trumpets warm with fatal fire,
 And where presumpt'ous fleets, with sails unfurl'd,
 Advance their daring prow, and threat a world.

Now

Now as around with trembling feet I rov'd,
And spy'd the glories of the isle I lov'd,
Lo! on a verdant throne of graceful mold,
My ravish'd eyes a goddess queen behold;
In all the pomp of majesty array'd,
She seem'd Britannia, or the warlike maid:
But soon I hail my country's genius known,
By the fell lion and the nautic crown.

With some portentous thought she seems oppress'd,
And scarce conceals the workings of her breast;
But now a lambent smile proclaims her peace,
And now both rage and scorn suffuse her face.

In massive chains the British lion bound,
 He foams with rage, and beats the subject ground ;
 His former glories all his mind inspire,
 His eye still flashes with indignant fire ;
 Still from his neck he spurns th' inglorious chain,
 And wishful looks towards th' embattled plain.

Close by his side, her golden arms unbound,
 In graceful pile adorn the flow'ry ground,
 The gift of Vulcan ; and of heav'nly mold,
 With living sculpture rising on the gold ;
 In mimic life here armies tread the field,
 The wars of Britain graven on the shield ;

Heroes, who fierce invading hosts withstood,
Martyrs, who seal'd their freedom with their blood;
Courageous kings, in well-fought fields approv'd,
By subjects reverenc'd, and by Heav'n belov'd;
Patriots, who for their country dar'd to die,
And chiefs applauded by posterity!

Here Britons nurs'd 'midst dreadful war's alarms,
Combat the Conqueror of Gaul in arms;
And lo! Caractacus still threat'ning stands,
And darts defiance at the Roman bands.
Here teeming swarms of fell rapacious Danes,
With hostile banners croud th' empurpled plains;

Deep

Deep dy'd in blood, what crimes, what woes succeed,
 'Till England rous'd by Alfred makes them bleed?
 Immortal Alfred! whose aspiring soul
 No fears could terrify, no foe controul:
 Lo! at his word whole forests quit the plain,
 And rush in navies to the wond'ring main;
 Round Albion's Isles proclaim his boundless sway,
 Assert his empires, and his pow'r display.
 Here stood furrounded by a warlike throng,
 Who live eternal in the Muse's song,
 Edward! whose maiden sword made Gallia yield,
 Whose unstrung arm subdu'd proud Cressy's field;
 -----And here he fights on Poictier's fatal plain,
 A vanquish'd monarch stooping to his chain;

And

And here his gen'rous sympathy confess,
The milder virtues of his God-like breast;
For lo! that hand which fearless smotes his foes,
Supplies their wants, and palliates all their woes.

Next saw I Harry, with indignant brow,
The scorn retorting of a haughty foe;
His might did bloody Agincourt display,
And subject Gallia yielded to his sway.

Now on the burnish'd shield a manly train
Assert the glories of Eliza's reign;
Here Drake and Raleigh, with their sails unfurl'd,
Now plant an empire, now surround a world;

And

And here th' Armada, pride of boastful Spain,
That crouded once, now conquer'd on the main.

Here too I mark where furious Cromwell stood,
His hostile spear embu'd in Gallic blood;
His soul still meditates the mighty blow,
And still he frowns indignant on the foe;
Asserts his country's glory and her fame,
While humbled Bourbon trembles at his name.

----But see where Heav'n and Nassau lead the way,
To free Britannia from a tyrant's sway;
With peace and freedom smiles each village swain,
And tells the blessings of a William's reign.

Next I behold where Anne and Marlbro' shine,
 Victorious on the Danube and the Rhine;
 Illustrious Queen! who rais'd her country's fame,
 Subdu'd her foes, and left a deathless name:
 Auspicious Chief! still live in fame's bright page,
 Who gave the lion all his native rage;
 Hail glorious twain! for you the warrior mourns,
 And Britain's Genius still bedews your urns!

But lo! what glorious scenes before me rise,
 On eagle-wings aspiring to the skies;
 As here enthron'd in gold mine eyes beheld,
 Victorious in the ocean and the field,
 Brunswick! for whom the verse shall ever flow,
 The warrior sigh, and Fame's loud clarion blow;

Him

Him Neptune yields the trident of the main,
 And Mars his empire o'er th' empurpled plain.

Cloſe by his ſide, juſt burſting from a cloud,
 In CHATHAM'S awful form Minerva ſtood ;
 While crown'd with laurel, Victory confeſt,
 The mighty goddeſs lab'ring in his breaſt :
 And now in burniſh'd ſilver here were ſeen,
 Of youthful aſpect, and commanding mien,
 Three warrior chieftains, and a gracious maid,
 Like the four guardians of the world array'd ;
 In ſuppliant poſture bow before the throne,
 And offer homage to the Britiſh crown.

Scarce

Scarce could mine eye run o'er th' historic page,
Each former triumph adding fresher rage,
When lo! Britannia rising thus exprest
The passion lurking in her virgin breast;
With silent awe I lend a willing ear,
And thus, while thousands croud around, I hear:
" How long shall Britain, lull'd to baneful rest,
" Bid insult plant her daggers in my breast?
" Degen'rate Britain! whose unconscious earth
" To Alfred, Edward, Henry, once gave birth;
" O! could they from the realms of endless day
" Their still-lov'd, once-victorious isle survey,
" No more ambitious of the war's alarms,
" The martial clarion, and the din of arms;

But

“ But sunk in baneful luxury and peace,

“ Nor left one feature of their warlike race :

“ Each laurel'd chief would blush with burning shame,

“ To see his Britons dwindled to a name ;

“ Dispell'd their courage, and extinct their fires,

“ Who boast, but dare not emulate their fires !

“ False to themselves, of ev'ry foe afraid,

“ By France insulted, and by France betray'd.

“ Presumptuous France ! when at my feet you lay

“ The glorious conquest of a sev'n year's fray ;

“ Bleeding in ev'ry clime, at ev'ry vein,

“ Nor left the dreary refuge of the main ;

E

“ When

“ When you besought me with a suppliant tear,

“ Did I not scorn to urge the lifted spear?

“ Did I not hearken to your tale of woe,

“ And pour the balm of pity on a foe?

“ Tho’ now her thousands slain my Britain weeps,

“ Say, dost thou think her mighty lion sleeps?

“ Know, if he slumbers o’er insulting wrongs,

“ Or tho’ provok’d, his vengeance he prolongs,

“ Again appall’d, thy desolated shore,

“ Shall hear dismay’d, and tremble at his roar;

“ In vain for rest you seek the distant field,

“ New Cressy’s shall again new laurels yield;

“ In

“ In vain for refuge seek the wat’ry way,

“ Again ye perish in Biscaia’s Bay.

“ Still you remember when your crouded shore

“ Saw ocean redden with the Gallic gore;

“ When Hawke and Conflans met in dreadful fight,

“ Thus * Ierne’s genius, glorying at the fight;

“ When e’en thro’ coward fear thy sons expire,

“ By rocks thy squadrons perish, or by fire;

“ When the VILLAIN affrighted chang’d his course,

“ And all his waters rush’d towards their source.

“ Have you forgot Boscawen’s dreadful name,

“ Great Grandby’s deeds, and Blackney’s deathless fame?

* The troops on board this fleet were intended for the invasion of Ire’and.

· How Townshend's arm to certain conquest led,
“ How gallant WOLFE did conquer, how he bled?
“ How Amherst's soul to glorious deeds aspir'd,
“ How virtue mov'd him, and how Britain fir'd ;
“ Amherst ! for whom eternal wreaths shall bloom,
“ Adorn his life, nor wither on his tomb ;
“ Amherst still lives---you dread him from afar,
“ The pride of peace---the thunderbolt of war ;
“ Still lives to plan the quick, decisive blow,
“ And hurl my ready vengeance on the foe.

“ Tho' now my Chatham roams th' Elysian strand,
“ And half a world desert their native land ;
“ Tho' now ungen'rous you my woes survey,
“ And hang like vultures o'er your certain prey ;

“ Yet

“ Yet still a patriot croud and warrior band
“ With virtue and with courage guard my land ;
“ Great as when Rome her ready vengeance hurl'd,
“ And vanquish'd or o'er-aw'd a trembling world.
“ With such a glorious, gallant train, who dare
“ To plan the conquest, and its dangers share ;
“ Who seek thro' gen'rous means a gen'rous end,
“ Can you, can all your servile sons contend ?

“ When brave Paoli struggled hard with fate,
“ Like Cato fighting for a falling state,
“ Still from my breast a sigh of pity stole,
“ And rous'd the dormant passions of my soul.

F

“ O ! had

“ O! had my sons attended my command,

“ And greatly rescu'd a devoted land ;

“ Thro' every age had stream'd the grateful tear,

“ You still had bled beneath my thirsty spear ;

“ Eternal fame had been the glorious meed,

“ And men and angels both approv'd the deed.

“ Rouse, rouse, my Britons! rouse at honour's call,

“ And in your vengeance crush insulting Gaul!

“ 'Tis not for rapine now ye stem the flood,

“ To plunge your hostile spears in brother's blood ;

“ It is not now a free-born nation braves,

“ One British arm can chace a host of slaves ;

“ As

“ As now we fight against a perjur'd land,

“ Revenge shall warm each breast, and nerve each hand.

“ And say, when Chatham bids, can Britons pause?

“ When fainting now, he pleads my injur'd cause ;

“ When now he calls my sons, with parting breath,

“ And urges war 'midst all the frowns of death.

“ And lo! where yonder navy seeks the main,

“ The scourge of Gallia, and the dread of Spain !

“ Each sail unfolding to the smiling breeze,

“ To it I give the empire of the seas ;

“ To Keppel give to plow my vast domain,

“ And ride triumphant o'er the subject main :

“ ---And

“ -----And now methinks I see him from afar,

“ Assert his country, and provoke the war ;

“ Again we glory in the war's alarms,

“ Again we combat half the world in arms ;

“ Again our fleets the farthest isles explore,

“ And plant my flag on ev'ry hostile shore.

“ Nurse of heroic deeds and daring men,

“ Genius of war ! descend on Britain's plain ;

“ O warm my sons with more than mortal fire !

“ Nerve ev'ry arm, and ev'ry breast inspire !

“ And thou Bellona ! mount thy blood-stain'd car,

“ High poise thy helm, and meditate the war ;

“ Nor

“ Nor spurn thy thirsty spear and blood-stain'd robe,

“ 'Till Fame shall hail me Mistress of the Globe ;

“ 'Till Britain's flag shall awe the subject main,

“ 'Till the freed Corsican contemn his chain,

“ And humbled Bourbon bleed at ev'ry vein.”

She said and ceas'd-----then high displays in air,

Th' historic shield, and waves her martial spear ;

Heroic ardour flies from band to band,

And war re-echos thro' the joyful land.

F I N I S.

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(25)

" For spurs thy shield, and sword shall shine
" Till Fame shall find the walls of the Globe;
" Till Britain's flag shall wave the fairest name
" Till the good God can crown his state;
" And humbled Bourbon bleed at every vein
The kind and cased--the high cliffs in air
The historic shield, and wave its martial spear;
Heroic ardor rise from hand to hand,
And war re-echoes thro' the joyful land.

Y I N I S



